

## Lumbering and steamboating on the St. Croix River /

E. W. Durant

### **LUMBERING AND STEAMBOATING ON THE ST. CROIX RIVER.\***

\* Read at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, April 11, 1904.

BY CAPTAIN EDWARD W. DURANT.

The magnitude of the lumber industry of the St. Croix valley is almost beyond the comprehension of anyone who has not applied himself to a thorough study of the subject from every standpoint. Even the primitive logger of pioneer days had only a poor idea of the almost limitless timber resources of the district. As he plodded along farther and farther from the St. Croix, he beheld vast tracts of standing pine, but little did he realize that billions upon billions of timber would float down the St. Croix and its tributaries before the entire output should be exhausted, and that thousands upon thousands of men would for more than fifty years be engaged in preparing it for the market.

Except in small tracts, little remains of the gigantic forests, the woodsman's axe and sweeping fires having devastated them; and many thousands of acres of land, formerly covered with a thick growth of timber, have been transformed into beautiful farms, so that only history and memory remain as reminders of former conditions.

The lumber district of the St. Croix valley extends from township 29 north to township 49 north, and from range 5 west to range 26 west. The south line begins near Hudson, Wis., and extends north to the line of the Northern Pacific railway. The east and west line begins at range 5 west, near lake Namekagon and runs west to range 26 west, to the tributaries of Snake river. The shape of the district is that of a huge fan. The district covers eight thousand five hundred square miles, comprising five million four hundred and forty

## Library of Congress

thousand acres, the major portion 646 of which was originally covered with a heavy growth of white and Norway pine timber.

The St. Croix lumber district is traversed by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha railway, from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Duluth, Superior, Washburn, and Ashland; the Northern Pacific railway from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Stillwater, to Taylor's Falls, Grantsburg, Duluth, Superior, and Ashland; the Great Northern railway, via the Eastern Minnesota line, from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Duluth and Superior; the Soo railway from St. Paul and Minneapolis, through the southern portion; and the Wisconsin Central through the extreme lower portion.

One of the important factors of the lumber business has been the lowering of freight rates on lumbermen's supplies. In the good old times, the hauling of supplies to the camps was a most expensive item. Then the cost was two dollars per hundred pounds. The rates for ten years past, by rail, have been from 25 to 40 cents per hundred pounds. In the days of high freights logs sold in Stillwater at \$6 to \$9 per thousand feet. During the past year lumbermen have paid higher prices for standing timber than the logs sold for at Stillwater some years ago. At this writing logs vastly inferior in quality sell for \$15 to \$20 per thousand feet.

In the early days the lumbermen would sometimes wait until midwinter for snow to haul logs, a load consisting of from two to five thousand feet, over a road from one to three miles in length. How great the change at this later day! Only cold weather is requisite for successful work. The logging road is cut wide and straight, two grooves are cut, and an ice track is formed with the early freezing. Although the logging road may be from five to ten miles in length, loads of logs measuring from 10,000 to 25,000 feet are hauled as a usual thing. For the past five years snow has ceased to be an important factor for hauling logs.

The early history of lumbering has been a history of waste in all lumber districts. Probably the natural wastage of timber incidental to the early history of cutting logs, supplemented

by the terrific forest fires that always follow in the wake of the lumberman's axe, nearly if not quite equalled the quantity brought to market. 'Tis the same old story, "Plenty breeds waste."

647

Although the pine timber has been cut and large areas of land have been swept by fire, the land itself has not suffered any deterioration. Scattered throughout this vast area, the camp and so-called hovel of the lumberman have disappeared, and the house and barn have taken the places they occupied; the plow and harrow have been substituted for the axe and peevy; and the thoroughbred bull has taken the place of the cant-hook. Agriculture is soon to become the paramount interest. The retreating footsteps of the lumbermen are being retraced by men and families seeking homes along the beautiful streams and lakes that thread what was once a magnificent forest of pine in both Minnesota and Wisconsin.

### **THE RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.**

Beyond any question the lumber district of the St. Croix possessed advantages unknown in any other lumbering locality. The lake and river St. Croix are for many miles the dividing line between the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The river St. Croix is the great artery fed by numerous tributaries taking rise in each state. Beginning at Hudson, Wis., the first tributary is Willow river, a large lumber stream. Next, six miles above Stillwater, is Apple river, an important Wisconsin stream. Then come Wood river, Clam river, Yellow river, Loon creek; then the famous Namekagon river, with all its tributaries, noted as logging streams, namely, the Totogatic and Totogatic Oonce, Hay Creek, Chippenazy, Bean brook, Potato creek, Mosquito brook, and Big and Little Pucway Oonce; and, highest of the eastern tributaries, the Eau Claire river and lakes. The beautiful Upper St. Croix lake, on the main stream a few miles below its farthest springs, lies near the watershed of the Great Lakes and the St. Croix. Moose river, noted for the superiority of its timber, Crotty

## Library of Congress

brook, Rocky brook, and Chase's brook, join the St. Croix in Wisconsin from its northwest side, as one descends from the upper lake.

On the Minnesota side of the St. Croix we have the Sunrise river as its lowest important tributary. About twenty miles farther up is the long and tortuous Kanabec or Snake river, with its numerous tributaries, namely Ground House, Ann, and Knife 648 rivers, Snowshoe brook, Hay creek, Chesley brook, and Pokegama and Mission creeks. This stream has furnished a greater quantity of logs than any other stream of the district. Kettle river, beautiful with its falls, rocks, and rapids, has been an important lumber stream, with its tributaries, Grindstone, Pine, Split Rock, Dead Moose, Moose Horn, Moose, and Willow rivers, with numerous other small streams meandering through the pine forests of this region. Sand creek, a slight thread of water, with an area of magnificent forest, has produced a greater number of logs than any similar sized stream tributary to the St. Croix. In the eastern part of Pine county are the Big and Little Tamarack rivers, Spruce river, and other small but important logging streams.

Probably the David Tozer timber tract, on the Tamarack river, is one of the largest tracts of uncut timber now on the St. Croix waters.

The state boundary line crosses the St. Croix in the southwest corner of township 42, range 15. The log supply of this district is about equally divided between the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

### **FIRST STEPS IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUMBER INDUSTRY.**

The first logs cut were by Joseph R. Brown on the Taylor's Falls flat in the winter of 1836 and 1837. The first regular outfit was that of John Boyce, who came with a Mackinaw boat from St. Louis with eleven men and six oxen, late in the fall of 1837. He located a camp at the mouth of the Kanabec or Snake river. A quantity of logs were cut, but trouble with

## Library of Congress

the Indians, coupled with many difficulties in driving the winter cut of logs, discouraged Mr. Boyce to the extent that he abruptly closed his unsuccessful venture.

In the spring of 1838, Franklin Steele formed a copartnership with Messrs. Fitch of Muscatine, Iowa, Libby of Alton, Illinois, Hungerford and Livingston of St. Louis, Mo., and Hill and Holcomb of Quincy, Illinois. This company chartered the steamer Palmyra, loaded the boat with sawmill machinery, secured a corps of mechanics, and began operations toward building a sawmill at the Falls of the St. Croix river, in the state of Wisconsin. 649 The plans and operations of this company were beset by many and serious difficulties, yet they opened the lumber trade of the St. Croix valley, and, for a number of years, supplied the building material to the inhabitants of the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, bordering on the Mississippi river, between the St. Croix river and St. Louis.

The first rafts of lumber and logs taken from the St. Croix lumber district were owned and sent to market by this St. Croix Falls Lumber Company. Up to the spring of 1843 the shipments of this company consisted solely of sawed lumber, lath, and shingles. The high water of that spring caused the company's boom to give way, and the entire stock of logs was carried down the St. Croix river. The men who had worked in the woods followed the logs to Stillwater. John McKusick was placed in charge of the logs and collected enough to make four rafts of five hundred thousand feet each. Two of the rafts were placed in charge of Stephen B. Hanks, who can justly lay claim to being the first man to pilot a raft of logs from the St. Croix river to St. Louis. Mr. Hanks employed Severe Bruce to run one of the rafts in his charge. One raft was in charge of James McPhail, and one raft was in charge of William Ganley. The logs were sold to West & Vandeventer and a portion of them to Clark & Child. The Mr. Clark referred to is W. G. Clark, who continued in the sawmill business for many years and is now a resident of Stillwater.

The breaking of a log boom at the time mentioned was a serious drawback to the lumber interest of the St. Croix valley, yet it was the beginning of a commerce aggregating many millions of dollars. It marked a new era. The first four rafts that passed down the St. Croix

## Library of Congress

and Mississippi were the advance guard of many thousand that have followed them during two-thirds of a century since the industry was inaugurated.

### **THE EARLY SAWMILLS.**

After disposing of his share of the logs above mentioned, John McKusick purchased, with the proceeds, a full outfit of machinery for an overshot water-wheel mill to be erected at a site which is now the city of Stillwater. On his return from St. Louis he associated himself with Elias McKean, Elam Greeley, Jacob Fisher, and Calvin F. Leach. They formed a copartnership, and proceeded to build a sawmill. The mill began sawing lumber April 3, 1844. It was managed successfully for twenty years, when the two up and down saws, "The fiddler and the dancing master," gave way to more improved methods and machinery. The site of this mill is one thousand feet inland from the former log way.

The first St. Croix sawmill was built and in operation in 1838 at Marine. The site was selected, and the mill was built and began sawing, within a space of ninety days. The Marine Lumber Company consisted of Lewis George, Albert Judd, Orange Walker, Asa Parker, Samuel Burkleo, and Hiram Berkey. This mill continued in operation for over fifty years, and during the last ten years of its existence was managed by the late firm of Anderson & O'Brien.

Connected with this mill is a reminiscence that is of interest to the citizens of our capital city. In the winter of 1840 and 1841, the citizens of St. Paul decided to build 3 Catholic church. The plans and specifications were placed in the hands of Joseph Labissonniere. They contemplated a structure 18 feet in width, and 24 feet in length; height of the sides, 10 feet; the roof to overhang two feet and to be made of Norway pine slabs, 12 inches in width, each slab to be fastened by six wooden pins. The main structure was to be built of logs cut in the vicinity of the church. (This church stood on Bench street, somewhere in the rear of the old Mannheimer building on Third street.) The only nails to be used were such as might be necessary for the doors. The village blacksmith was to make the nails and

## Library of Congress

hinges for the doors. In the fall of 1840 a small steamboat, the St. Anthony, commanded by Count Haraszthy, a Hungarian nobleman, was compelled to remain at St. Paul all winter, being unable to get away before the close of navigation. The importance of building the church was the all-absorbing topic during the winter. The count became interested and volunteered to go up the St. Croix with his steamboat the next spring and bring the slabs, if the people of St. Paul would furnish two men to load and unload. Thereupon Isaac Labissonniere and Raphael Lessner thanked the count for the courtesy extended and made the trip successfully by securing the slabs, as Labissonniere said, "Free gratis for nothing." Thus it will be seen that the St. Croix people took an early interest and a substantial part in Christianizing St. Paul.

The Arcola mills were built in the winter of 1846 and 1847 by Martin Mower, David B. Loomis, W. H. C. Folsom, and Joseph Brewster. Subsequently the capacity was largely increased and the mills became the property of Martin and John E. Mower, who operated them successfully for a number of years.

The Franconia mill was built by Clark Brothers and Ansel Smith. The career of the mill was varied and brief.

The Osceola mill was built and began sawing in 1845. The company owning the mill consisted of Messrs. M. V. and W. H. Nobles, William Kent, William C. Mahony, and Harvey Walker.

The first mill at Hudson, Wis., was built in 1850, and was known as the Purington mill. After a varied career it was destroyed by fire. In 1883 a new and modern mill was built by the Hudson Lumber Company. This mill is one of the successful ones and is today one of the prominent mills of the St. Croix valley. As nearly as can be estimated, the lumber cut at Hudson has amounted to about 400,000,000 feet.

The mill history of Lakeland begins with the time when Moses Perrin built and began operating a sawmill in 1854. Ballard & Reynolds erected a mill in 1857. The financial

## Library of Congress

panic in 1857 wound up the business affairs of both mills. Later on, C. N. Nelson came into possession of the Ballard & Watson mill. He added to its size and capacity, thus making it a successful business venture. Later on, Messrs. Fall & McCoy built a mill at Lakeland, which, although of medium capacity, was by good management made a profitable investment. At this writing these mills have been dismantled of their machinery, and the buildings have been removed.

The Afton sawmill was built by Lowry & Co. in 1854, rebuilt in 1855 by Thomas & Sons, and succumbed to the hard times of 1857. Getchell Brothers built their mill in 1861, which, although a small mill, to use a Maine expression, was a "smart one." Destruction by fire was the closing scene in its history.

The Glenmont saw mill was built by Olds & Lord in 1857. It was subsequently purchased by Gillespie & Harper, and was destroyed by fire some years since.

652

The Point Douglas mill was built by A. J. Short, and began sawing on May 15, 1867. Later Mr. Short sold a half interest in this mill to David Cover. In 1869 Mr. Gardner purchased the Cover interest, and subsequently he purchased the interest held by Mr. Short. This entire property was later purchased by the veteran lumberman, John Dudley, who always made a success of his investments.

The Prescott sawmill was built by Messrs. Silverthorn & Dudley in 1856. Mr. Dudley became the sole owner in 1861. This mill continued to manufacture lumber until the early nineties.

### **THE LATER MILLS AND THEIR PRODUCTION.**

The Rust-Owen Company mill at Drummond, Wis., situated on the headwaters of the Namekagon river, is a great mill, with the most improved modern machinery and facilities for handling and sawing lumber. It was erected in 1882 by a corporation styled and known



## Library of Congress

as the Drummond Lumber Company. John S. Owen was the president; F. H. Drummond, vice president; and R. E. Rust, secretary and treasurer. Later, Mr. F. W. Gilchrist became president, and A. J. Rust secretary and treasurer. The lumber cut of this company's mill foots up to 475,000,000 feet, including lath and shingles. The company has a large tract of pine, and will continue to saw for several years to come.

The Shell Lake Lumber Company's mill is located on the headwaters of Yellow river. It was constructed and began sawing in 1881, with one gang and one circular saw. In 1883 the mill was finally completed, the outfit consisting of two gangs and two circular saws. This mill was owned and managed by Messrs. Weyerhaeuser & Denckmann of Rock Island, Illinois, Lamb & Sons of Clinton, Iowa, and Messrs. Laird, Norton & Co., of Winona. The officers were L. Lamb, president; G. E. Lamb, vice president, both of Clinton, Iowa; F. Weyerhaeuser, secretary and treasurer, Rock Island, Ill.; W. R. Bourne, manager, Shell Lake, Wis. The company was organized and began the erection of the mill in October, 1880. The mill began sawing in the fall of 1881 with one gang and one circular saw. It was subsequently enlarged to double capacity. The great plant 653 ceased work in September, 1902. The last product of its cut was sold in September, 1903. Including lath and shingles, its cut was 550,000,000 feet.

The Barronnett Lumber Company's mill at Barronnett, Wis., was built and managed by the corporation which built and managed the Shell Lake Company's mill. This mill was erected and began sawing, March, 1881, and was in operation up to September 1, 1894, when the entire property was totally obliterated by fire. The lumber cut of this mill was 165,000,000 feet.

The Beaver Dam Lumber Company, the Cumberland Lumber Company, and the Beaver Lake Lumber Company, at Cumberland, Wis., three corporations, were managed by the following: C. W. Griggs, president; A. G. Foster, vice president; F. W. Mills, treasurer; and F. L. Olcutt, secretary. The saws of the Cumberland Lumber Company cut 7,000,000 feet of lumber during the season of 1881. The Beaver Lake Lumber Company during the

## Library of Congress

period from 1882 to 1888 cut 135,000,000 feet, and the Beaver Dam Lumber Company cut 170,000,000 feet from 1888 to 1893, making a total of 312,000,000 feet.

The sawmill at New Richmond, Wis., was built in 1880 and owned by John E. Glover & Co. This mill has been in constant operation, and is fully employed at the present time. It has a large capacity, has cut two hundred and fifty million feet of lumber, and has standing timber for many years to come.

The sawmill at Clear Lake, Wis., under the ownership of John E. Glover & Co., has cut about 150,000,000 feet of lumber up to the present time.

The mill at Jewett's Falls, Wis., was built by Mr. Jewett. It was in operation some ten years, cutting about 70,000,000 feet of lumber. It was abandoned many years ago.

A number of sawmills of small capacity were cutting lumber at an early day, but little information can be obtained regarding them. Joseph Barron had a mill at Barron, Wis., that cut probably ten million feet. Mr. Woodville had a mill at Woodville, Wis. It was an active mill, situated in a timber vicinity. The estimated cut of the mill is 75,000,000 feet.

There was a small mill at Amery, Wis., in early days, but the writer was unable to gain any information as to the amount of its cut.

654

Somerset, Wis., was the abode of the redoubtable Gen. Samuel Harriman. From the the best information obtainable the mill at that point was built in the 50's, and probably cut some fifty million feet of lumber.

The mill at Hinckley, Minn., originated with Thomas Brennan, who built and equipped it, and established retail lumber yards in St. Paul and elsewhere. Mr. Brennan disposed of this property in 1889 to a corporation composed of the following well known lumbermen: Messrs. W. A. Rust, John S. Owen, Henry D. Davis, H. C. Putnam, and E. B. Putnam, all

## Library of Congress

of Eau Claire, Wis. The management of this company was with John S. Owen, president; H. D. Davis, vice president and general manager; and E. B. Putnam, secretary and treasurer. Immediately after the purchase, the mill was destroyed by fire in 1889. Steps were at once taken to build a new mill with largely increased capacity. The new mill was in active operation when the memorable Hinckley fire destroyed the entire property, including thirty million feet of lumber in pile, besides a large body of standing timber. Some fifteen million feet of logs, that escaped the fire by being in the flowage of the Grindstone river, were taken to Stillwater to be sawed at the Atwood mills. The cut of the Hinckley mills was about 175,000,000 feet.

The Atwood Lumber Company, owning a mill at Willow River, Minn., was organized in 1895, the company purchasing the timber holdings and other interests of the Fox & Wisdom Lumber Company. The extensive improvement made to this property has made it thoroughly a first-class modern sawmill, with planing mills, and all necessary accessories for any demand that may arise for the lumber product. The yearly cut of this mill has been thirty million feet. The officers are Frederick Weyerhaeuser, president; George H. Atwood, secretary and general manager; and William Sauntry, treasurer.

The Rutledge Lumber and Manufacturing Company, at Rutledge, Minn., was organized in 1891, with A. Rutledge, president; William Sauntry, vice president; J. D. McCormack, secretary and general manager. This organization began logging operations and built the sawmill on Pine river, at a point one-half mile from Kettle River falls, in the fall and winter of 1891. The mill began sawing in June, 1892. The mill has been in 655 operation continuously since that time, and will finish up November 1, 1904. With the logs they have on hand the product of this mill will be two hundred million feet of lumber, and then the milling industry in that part of the country will be a part of the history of the past.

### **STILLWATER MILLS.**

## Library of Congress

Sawyer & Heaton built a sawmill at Stillwater in 1850, which was destroyed by fire in 1852. A new and improved mill was immediately erected by Messrs. Sawyer & Heaton. This mill, after passing through several ownerships, became the property of Samuel Atlee & Co., and later on was purchased by Isaac Staples. It was managed by him for several years, until the location was sold to be used for other business purposes.

The Schulenburg-Boeckler Company was organized in 1856 by Frederick Schulenburg, A. Boeckler, and Louis Hospes. In 1887 Mr. Hospes retired, and his son, Hon. E. L. Hospes, became a partner in the firm. This mill for many years was the most important saw mill of the Northwest. Some years later the firm was dissolved. The mill became the property of Isaac Staples, E. L. Hospes, and Samuel Atlee, which firm was succeeded by George H. Atwood, who became sole proprietor, and has increased the mill's capacity from thirty-five to forty-eight million feet of lumber annually, besides a large output of lath and shingles.

In 1873, Seymour, Sabin & Co. built a mill of medium capacity, which subsequently became the property of the C. N. Nelson Company. After several years this mill was dismantled, and the machinery taken elsewhere.

In the year 1854, the firm of Hersey, Staples & Co. built a sawmill of large capacity, which was owned and managed by them for many years. In 1871 it became the property of Hersey, Bean & Co. and later, in 1892, came under the management of George H. Atwood, since which time it has cut 500,000,000 feet of lumber, with a corresponding ratio of lath and shingles.

The East Side Lumber Company was incorporated in 1888. The original stockholders were John G. Nelson, Alex. Johnson, Robert Slaughter, David Bronson and E. A. Folsom, who purchased 656 the mill property of Nelson & Johnson in the town of Houlton, Wisconsin, opposite Stillwater. The first officers of this company were David Bronson, president; John G. Nelson, vice president; E. A. Folsom, secretary and treasurer; and Robert Slaughter, general manager. During the year 1902 a half interest in the stock, held by Nelson &

## Library of Congress

Johnson, was transferred to James D. and Roscoe H. Bronson. The following named gentlemen were elected officers: David Bronson, president; E. A. Folsom, vice president; James D. Bronson, secretary and treasurer; and Robert Slaughter, general manager. The mill operates one gang with a capacity of 150,000 feet per day, and one twin circular lath and shingle mill.

The St. Croix Lumber Company's mill was built in 1854, and was a total loss by fire in 1876. Mr. L. E. Torinus, in no wise discouraged, immediately took steps to and did erect an entirely new mill with much greater capacity than the old mill. The original corporation was formed by Messrs. L. E. Torinus, William Chalmers, Andrew Schow, and William Graves. Later, after the death of Mr. Torinus and the withdrawal of Messrs. Schow and Graves, the new corporation was formed by William Chalmers, Mrs. H. M. Torinus, L. E. Torinus, G. S. Welshons, and Martin Torinus. Within the past few years one of the company's mills was sold to the Eclipse Lumber Company, and one to Messrs. Tozer & Nolan. The St. Croix Lumber Company still retained the extensive wood-working factory, a large establishment.

Some years prior to 1870, Messrs. L. B. Castle and David C. Gaslin built a mill at South Stillwater. Later Mr. Castle disposed of his interest. At a later date, Messrs. Durant & Wheeler effected an arrangement with Mr. Gaslin to run the mill. Subsequently Mr. Gaslin retired from the company, Mr. Smith Ellison taking his interest. The corporation then assumed the name of Ellison & Co. Later, by reason of some change of ownership, the property became known as the South Stillwater Lumber Company, which corporation later disposed of the entire property to David Tozer, who has since made many and expensive improvements, resulting in its being one of the very best mills in the St. Croix valley. The improvements were based on the fact that Mr. Tozer has sufficient pine to supply his mill for many years to come.

## Library of Congress

The Hershey Lumber Company's mill was erected in 1875. It is designated as "the red mill." Mr. Benjamin Hershey was the first president of the company, and so remained until his death in 1893, since which time the management has been in charge of Mr. Hugh D. Campbell, who, with his large experience in all that pertains to logs and lumber, has rendered the business affairs of the company a pronounced success. With a crew of 110 men, the annual cut of the mill has averaged 25,000,000 feet of lumber.

The sawmill of R. W. Turnbull and A. R. Turnbull was built by these gentlemen in 1886. It has since been in continuous operation, giving employment daily during the summer to 125 men. The capacity of this mill is from 25,000,000 to 35,000,000 feet annually. Their shipments of lumber by water are very large, amounting to about four million feet of lumber, besides lath and shingles, in a single shipment.

The Eclipse Sawmill Company, at South Stillwater, was organized in 1901, being the successor of the St. Croix Lumber Company, having purchased one of that company's mills. This organization, by action of its board of directors, elected William Kaiser, president; H. D. Campbell, vice president; A. A. Ewart, secretary and treasurer; and I. L. Skeith, superintendent. This mill gives employment to 125 men, and has a capacity of 30,000,000 feet.

The John Martin Lumber Company had a mill situated at Mission Creek, Minn. This mill was operated successfully for a number of years by Captain John Martin. I have been unable to gain any information as to its time of erection, or length of time in operation, but have approximated the cut at 100,000,000 feet.

### **ST. LOUIS MILLS.**

The first sawmills at St. Louis to cut St. Croix pine logs were those of West & Van Deventer and Clark & Childs. Their mills enjoyed the distinction of being the first pine mills on the Mississippi river. This was in 1844, when they purchased four rafts that had

## Library of Congress

broken through the boom of the St. Croix Falls Lumber Company. Previous to the date mentioned, St. Louis depended on lumber brought in boats and barges from the 42 658 Ohio river, with the exception of small supplies received in rafts from the Chippewa, Black, and St. Croix rivers. Later on, St. Louis became a large buyer of logs and lumber from all the lumbering districts of the upper Mississippi.

### **PIONEER LUMBERMEN.**

First on the list of pioneer lumbermen is Joseph R. Brown, who operated first in 1836 and 1837. The first regular outfit for cutting was owned by John Boyce. He came here in the fall of 1837 with eleven men and six oxen. His logging operations were at the mouth, of the Snake river. Later on came Andrew Mackey, Smith Ellison, Patrick Fox, John McKusick, W. H. C. Folsom, Taylor & Fox, the Kent brothers, William O. Mahony, the Marine Lumber Company, the Stillwater Mill Company, Elias McKean, Calvin Leach, Samuei Burkleo, Jacob Fisher, Martin and John E. Mower, Stephen B. Hanks, A. M. Chase, Daniel Mears, C. G. Bradley, William McKusick, J. S. Anderson, Asa Parker, Hiram Berkey, John D. Ludden, Blake & Greeley, Sawyer & Heaton, John J. Robertson, Joseph W. Furber, James Spencer, James Casey, John O'Brien, Samuel Register, the St. Croix Falls Lumber Company, Thomas Dunn, Andrew Clendening, George Moore, Hugh Burns, James Roney, and David Tozer.

Fifty years ago, in 1854, Mr. Tozer began lumbering, is with us now, and is cutting more logs and lumber each year. He says it is too big a task to go up and look at his timber, but he is willing to wait for the logs to come and see him. L. E. Torinus died many years ago, but left an open pathway for the success of his sons.

Others were C. N. Nelson and Isaac Staples, who, with eastern associates, were the first large purchasers of pine lands and the earliest to begin lumbering on a large scale; Durant and Wheeler, who were largely interested in lumbering and steamboats; Henry McLane, who for fifty years has been on the St. Croix and spends his entire time in the woods,

## Library of Congress

always finding a chance to cut a few more logs; David Cover, who passed away after an active and busy life; James and Robert Malloy; the late ex-Senator J. S. O'Brien; David C. Gaslin; David Carmichael; 659 Patrick and Jerry Whalen; John Haggerty; James and Fred Pennington; and Knight and Grover, who were killed by the Indians in 1863. I think that was the only instance of lumbermen meeting death at the hands of the Indians. Death speedily overtook the Indians, and they are now good.

C. G. Bradley, William Blanding, Henry Hanscomb, Samuel Judd, William Veasey, Sven Magnuson, Charles Bean, Jacob Bean, William, John, and Jotham Lowell, Moses and Bentley Tuttle, Charles McMillian, William Chalmers, Captain Page, R. C. Libby, John E. Glover, John Dudley, Ludden and Greeley, Samuel Harriman, William Clark & Brother, Clark & McRea, John Holt, L. F. Olds, David Lord, C. S. Getchell, Mahlon Black, Frederick Lammers, Daniel Mears, McComb, Simpson & Anderson, Andrew McGrath, Short, Proctor & Co., John and William Fisher, John Calvin, John Little, James Mulvey, Henry Jackman, Charles Gardner, and Philip McDermott, complete the list.

The lumbering today is limited, in comparison with former years. The men who are now most largely engaged in cutting logs are Mulvey & Son, Samuel McClure, James McGrath, George and A. J. Lammers, William O'Brein, Donovan & Stack, Richard Welch, John G. Nelson, Musser, Sauntry & Co., William Sauntry, Eugene and James O'Neal, Otis Staples, James and John Crotty, Irvine & Kolliner, Edwin St. John, Bronson & Folsom, David Connors, Edward Barnes, and a few others.

### **LARGE BUYERS OF ST. CROIX LOGS.**

In the autumn of 1856 Messrs. E. S. & A. B. Youmans erected a sawmill in Winona. In common with other mills of that date, it had the regulation muley saw. In 1877 and 1878 the mill's capacity was increased by the addition of a gang. About this time the firm was incorporated as Youmans Brothers & Hodgkins. In 1887 and 1888 the mill's capacity was



## Library of Congress

again enlarged by the substitution of three gangs instead of one. This mill was in active operation until 1898, when it was shut down and dismantled.

In 1855 Laird Brothers were engaged in handling sawed 660 lumber from the Chippewa river. In October, 1856, this firm was changed to Laird, Norton & Co. They built their first mill in 1857. It consisted of one muley and one circular saw. The sawing capacity was subsequently enlarged by substituting two circulars for the muley and small circular. In 1878 the old mill was taken down and replaced by a new mill with modern machinery, including two gangs. This mill was destroyed by fire in June, 1887, and was immediately replaced by the present mill, which cuts thirty-five to forty million feet of lumber annually. Their mills have virtually run continuously since 1857 to the present time.

The Winona Lumber Company began business in 1881. Its career was inaugurated by the construction of a mill with two circulars and two gangs. The circulars were taken out and replaced by band saws, giving their mill a capacity of thirty-five to forty million feet annually. The mill has been in active operation since 1881, but for the past four years only the two band saws have been operated.

The Empire Lumber Company of Winona began the erection of its first mill in the winter of 1886–7. The machinery was brought from Eau Claire, a scarcity of logs there having changed the location to Winona. This mill likewise has an annual capacity of thirty-five to forty million feet, and has been sawing steadily since it was built.

The first three sawmills at Moline, Ill., were built in 1845 and 1846. They were water-power mills, and cut native timber. Dimmock, Gould & Co. purchased a raft of pine logs from W. H. C. Folsom in 1855, which were cut by a water-power mill and were used for making tubs and pails. Keator & Skinner built a steam sawmill there in 1858 and 1859, which cut St. Croix pine logs.

Bailey & Boyle built a sawmill at Rock Island, in their boat yard, which was used for the purpose of sawing timber for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad in 1850. They

## Library of Congress

sawed St. Croix logs. They were crowded out of their location in 1853 by that railroad, and rebuilt in the same year on the site now occupied by Weyerhaeuser & Denckmann for sawmill purposes, who bought the property in 1859 or 1860 and have steadily increased the plant's capacity. This mill was the initial step toward 661 the throne now held by the lumber king, Frederick Weyerhaeuser.

The first sawmill at Muscatine, Iowa, was a primitive affair and was erected in 1837. In 1843–44, a mill was built there by Cornelius Cable. In 1858 the mill was sold to Chambers Brothers. They enlarged this mill, and later built a steam sawmill. The two mills had a combined capacity of twenty million feet annually. They were operated until 1874, when the larger mill was burned. The property was sold in 1880 to a Mr. Dessaint, who in 1881 again sold it to the Muscatine Lumber Company. They enlarged it to a capacity of 25,000,000 feet annually. The natural enemy of sawmills overtook it in 1886, leaving it in ashes.

In 1852 Mr. Jacob Hershey laid the foundation of the great Hershey Lumber Company. Mr. Benjamin Hershey came into possession of the property in 1853. His restless genius contrived and carried out year by year many new and valuable adjuncts, which made the Hershey sawmill celebrated as not only a modern mill, but a model one. Mr. Hershey has passed away, the mill has been dismantled, but the memories of the eccentricities of Ben Hershey still remain with those who knew him.

In the late seventies U. N. Burdick built a mill at South Muscatine, and later it was sold to Ben Hershey, who operated it until 1893, when it was sold to Mr. John Kaiser. It is operated by the South Muscatine Lumber Company, and has an annual capacity of 25,000,000 feet.

The Musser Lumber Company in 1870 built a mill at South Muscatine. In 1880 the mill was enlarged and improved by adding machinery, which increased the output. Its annual output is 40,000,000 feet. This mill has constantly been in active operation. The Musser

## Library of Congress

Lumber Company is largely interested in many lumber and logging concerns on the St. Croix, being largely interested in the Musser and Sauntry timber holdings.

In 1848 a sawmill outfit was brought to Davenport, Iowa, from the Wisconsin river. The mill was managed by several owners until 1857, when it was burned.

In 1849 a Mr. Howard erected a mill at Davenport and sold it to Alex. McGregor, who in turn sold it to John Cannon. Later the firm was French & Cannon, succeeded by French & Davis. 662 It is now the property of Paige, Dixon & Co., and has, I think, discontinued sawing.

In 1849 Strong Burnett built a saw and planing mill at Davenport. In 1851 S. S. Gillett and J. H. Lambright became interested in the business. The firm was successful and did a large business in the pineries. The panic of 1857 was fatal, obliging them to close up its affairs. In 1865 the mill became the property of Dessaint & Schraver and so remains, cutting 13,000,000 feet annually.

The Renwick mill was built there in 1854 and was operated by Renwick & Son very successfully. It was under the management of Renwick, Shaw & Crossett. The capacity of the mill was 14,000,000 feet annually.

Lindsey & Phelps erected their mill at Davenport in 1864, and it has been inconstant operation. The mill has been a thorough success. Mr. John Phelps has passed from life's cares and duties, but the work he assisted in planning is being carried on by Mr. J. E. Lindsey, the surviving partner, who, at the age of seventy-eight years has apparently retained the physical and mental vigor requisite for the management of a large and increasing business. Mr. Lindsey is one of the few of the old time lumbermen that made up the lumber history of Minnesota and Wisconsin, who continues at the helm.

In 1868 Mr. L. C. Dessaint built a mill at East Davenport. In 1874 the mill came into the possession of George W. Cable. In 1879 the Cable Lumber Company was formed

## Library of Congress

and continues to the present time. The company for many years past has been largely interested in St. Croix timber lands and logs.

The Taber Lumber Company of Keokuk is largely engaged in cutting St. Croix logs in its mills, and the company has in the past twenty-five years been a large buyer in Stillwater.

The Carson, Rand, and Burlington Lumber Companies have for many years depended on the St. Croix market for filling special orders for large bridge and railroad timbers.

Zimmerman & Ives of Guttenberg, Dorchester & Hughey of Bellevue, the Standard Lumber Company of Dubuque, the Gem City Mill Company of Quincy, Ill., six large concerns at St. Louis, and many other smaller concerns on the Mississippi, procured their stock chiefly from the St. Croix.

663

### **RAFTING LOGS AND LUMBER.**

In the early days of lumbering on the St. Croix a raft contained some 500,000 feet of logs or lumber. The methods in vogue for getting these commodities to market were crude and exceedingly laborious, attended with more or less uncertainty. The first rafts taken out were taken through lakes St. Croix and Pepin by means of sails, if the wind proved to be fair, the sails being made by standing the shanty boards on end and tying blankets on poles in such a manner that they would catch the breeze. In calm weather, along a sandy beach, all hands went on shore, and pulled the raft by a hand line. This method was called cordelling, and two to four miles a day of sixteen hours was an average day's work. Sometimes, when cordelling was impracticable, two thousand feet of line was laid ahead with an anchor and warped in by hand.

Fearing storms, the men continued this work day and night as long as they could stand it to work without sleep. Now and then some passing boat bound down stream would take the rafts into tow. Captain R. S. Harris of the Otter and later the War Eagle, gave the rafts

## Library of Congress

a tow at so much per hour, I think \$15. The raft pilots were willing to pay any price to hurry through the raftman's dread, lake Pepin. The writer well remembers seeing the west shore of lake Pepin, from Lake City to Read's Landing, white from broken lumber, when three lumber rafts were broken to pieces and rendered entirely valueless in a storm, the breakup resulting in the loss of many thousands of dollars to the pilots and owners of the lumber.

Early in the 50's the lumber trade of the St. Croix assumed a commercial importance, sufficient to place towboats on lake St. Croix and lake Pepin, to tow rafts through the lakes mentioned. The Caleb Cape, in 1851, was the first towboat so engaged. The regular charge for taking a raft from Stillwater to Read's Landing, at the foot of Lake Pepin, was \$10 per string, rafts at that time containing eight to ten strings. A string was a row of lumber in cribs and was 500 feet in length. A string of logs consisted of a row of logs six to eight logs wide, bound together with poles fastened to the logs by boring two auger holes, one on each side of the pole, by which a small oak hook, called a lock-down, 664 was placed over the pole, the two ends of the lock-down being inserted in the auger holes and fastened with plugs. The log and lumber strings were of the same length, each being sixteen feet wide.

At that period the rafts were managed by large oars some forty-five feet long, one oar being placed on each end of a string of logs or lumber. With a man at each oar the raft was guided to its destination. The older pilots became very expert in the matter of handling their unwieldy crafts, and became thoroughly conversant with all the obstacles of navigation on the great stretch of the river, 800 miles, intervening between Stillwater and St. Louis, so that raft after raft was taken to its destination intact as when it started on the long and apparently never ending journey. In my opinion, the knowledge and skill of the steamboat and raft pilots, considering the length of the stream traversed, the then condition of the Mississippi river, unimproved, before government lights were placed for the guidance of the pilot, the vast number of boats, and the large number of rafts then passing down the river, are without a parallel in the history of navigation. Dark nights

## Library of Congress

were no obstacle, and only the lack of sufficient water to float the craft interfered with the commerce of the upper Mississippi.

Oh, the good old times from 1852 to the fatal September of 1857! Wages for raft and steamboat pilots were from \$300 to \$500 per month, and pilots were frequently engaged by contract for the entire season of navigation. Those were the days of huge gold watch chains, and of velvet on coat collars and cuffs. When ladies visited the pilot-house, the pilot donned kid gloves. The windows of the pilot-house were ornamented with the signature and address of many fair visitors. Possibly a reminiscent mood may recall this part of our early history to the memory of some of the grandmothers of the present day.

The *costume de rigueur* of the raft pilot was French calf boots, black cassimere trousers, red flannel shirt of extra fine knitted goods, a large black silk necktie, tied in a square knot with flowing ends, and a soft, wide-brimmed black or white hat. Owing to the infrequent visits of ladies, the kid gloves were dispensed with. The steamboat pilots were always on the watch upstream for their friends, the raft pilots, to throw them a package 665 of late newspapers, supplemented by the spirit dispenser's compliments in one or more bottles or demijohns.

Soon a new order of things began in the history of lumbering. In the 60's Captain C. G. Bradley undertook and made a successful trip by towing a raft with the steamboat Minnie Wills, to Clinton, Iowa. This system of taking logs and lumber to market increased rapidly, and within four years the logs heretofore rafted were "put up," as the saying is, in "brails," not using the former method of poles, plugs, lock-downs, and oars. Logs were placed in booms 600 feet in length or longer, and 125 feet in width, held together with cross lines. The gain to the log men was the lessening of expense in putting the logs in condition for the run to market, and to mill men the saving in lumber by not having the auger holes in the logs. Since the first venture of the Minnie Wills, with the new method of running logs and lumber, more than a hundred and fifty steamboats have been engaged in taking

## Library of Congress

the lumber product of the St. Croix, upper Mississippi, Chippewa, and Black rivers to the various distributing points along the Mississippi river.

The principal distributing points were as follows (the railway systems having changed the situation so that they now take the lumber from more northerly localities): Red Wing, Wabasha, Winona, La Crosse, McGregor, Guttenberg, Dubuque, Bellevue, Savanna, Galena, Fulton, Lyons, Clinton, Moline, Rock Island, Davenport, Muscatine, Burlington, Fort Madison, Keithsburg, Oquawka, Montrose, Keokuk, Canton, Quincy, Hannibal, Louisiana, Alton, and St. Louis.

A small quantity of lumber was taken to Memphis during the war. The raft was run by Captain David Hanks. Notwithstanding that it was a raft, and not a gunboat, members of the crew were made targets by the guerrillas on shore; but the raft and crew escaped and reached Memphis.

The first raft boats cost possibly \$3,000, but since the advent of the Minnie Wills the large sawmill firms have placed in the towing business boats of greater cost, power, and speed, than the average upper Mississippi packets of early days. Some of these boats have taken rafts from Stillwater containing 5,400,000 feet of lumber, heavily laden with lath, shingles, and pickets, a cargo valued at \$60,000.

666

### **PILOTS.**

First on the list of pilots, and now in good health, is Capt. Stephen B. Hanks of Albany, Ill., who began his career in 1841. Others were William Ganley, Phineas O. Lawrence, James McPhail, Nelson Allen, now of Minneapolis, Edward Whiting, Severe Bruce, Patrick Fox, who made one or two trips, Pembroke Herold, David Hanks, Daniel Davidson, Aaron, George, and Mahlon Winans, David and John Wray, Edwin Efner, E. W. Durant, Wiley Penney, Samuel Hanks, John Hanford, W. A. Payne, John Gabriel, Samuel Register, George Penney, Joseph Perro, familiarly known as Big Joe, George Brassar, D.

## Library of Congress

McDonald, H. L. Peevy, Robert Dodds, Hiram Cobb, William Dorr, Charles and Stephen Rhoads, Peter Carlton, Aug. Barlow, Samuel Macey, William Elliott, C. G. Bradley, R. J. Wheeler, Harry Wheeler, Ed. Root, Alfred and Thomas Withrow, William and James Whistler, John Goodnow, Joe Denvier, Frank Wild, George Wallace, Charles Short, A. M. Short, A. L. Short, Loam Short, H. Short, L. A. Day, L. A. Day, Jr., John McCaffrey, James Hugunin, Cornelius Knapp, Ira Fuller, William Yorks, A. J. Chapman, Caleb Philbrook, John Cormack, Washington Allen, John Munroe, Abram Mitchell, John Leach, Daniel McLean, James Newcomb, John Rutherford, Jack Walker, Thomas Forbush, Sherman Hallum, Charles Roman, Captain Kratzke, Will. Davis, John McCarthy, Peter O'Rourke, Thomas O'Rourke, Nelson Allen, Patrick and John Gainor, Asa Woodward, John Gilbert, John Seabring, John and Thomas Hoy, Walter Hunter, Isaac Newcomb, Ira De Camp, William Wier, Frank Newcomb, Rufus Newcomb, James Haggerty, Joseph Sloan, A. T. Jenks, George, Chris, and Alfred Carpenter, Charles A. Davidson, Ed. Huttinghorn, William Slocum, William Slocum, Jr., Herbert Miliron, Ed. Miller, Al. Shaw, Lindsey, alias "Old Kentuck," Daniel Flynn, Frank Whitnall, and Ed. Grant Many of these have passed away, while others are still actively employed on the St. Croix and Mississippi boats.

### **STEAMBOATS.**

The first steamboat to navigate the waters of Lake St. Croix and river was the Palmyra, Captain Middleton of Hannibal, Mo. 667 This boat landed at Taylor's Falls in July, 1838. The second boat was the Gypsy, which landed at Stillwater in November, 1838. This boat brought up the supplies and money used in paying the Chippewa Indians, pursuant to the treaty made July 29, 1837, between the Indians and the United States government. The third boat to navigate the St. Croix was probably the Fayette, in the early summer of 1839, bringing supplies and sawmill machinery for the Marine Lumber Company, which were landed at Marine. Later on, in 1840, the boats coming to the St. Croix waters were the Annie, General Pike, Indian Queen and Brazil. In 1841 the boats coming to the St.



## Library of Congress

Croix were the Otter, Captain R. S. Harris; the Chippewa, Captain Griffith; the Sarah Ann, Captain Lafferty; and the Rock River, Captain Haraszthy, a Hungarian count and exile.

In 1842 came the New Brazil, Capt. Orren Smith, considered quite large, being 160 feet long and 23 feet beam; the Amaranth, Capt. G. W. Atchison; Lone, Capt. Le Roy Dodge; the General Brooke, Capt. Throckmorton; and the Otter and Rock River. In 1843 came the Jasper; and in 1844 the Lewis F. Lynn, Capt. S. M. Kennett, Lynx, Capt. W. H. Hooper, the St. Croix, and the Cecilia.

In 1845 came the Uncle Tobey, Captain Cole, Mendota, Hibernian, and St. Anthony; in 1846, the War Eagle, Capt. D. S. Harris, Falcon, Prairie Bird, Capt. Nick Wall, and the Cora. The War Eagle towed a fleet of rafts through lake Pepin for Capt. Stephen B. Hanks.

In 1847 came the Argo, Capt. M. W. Lodwick, with R. Blakeley, clerk. The writer shipped a quantity of corn on this boat for the St. Croix. The Argo struck a snag just above Winona, near a small island, which received from this incident the name of Argo island. The boat was advertised as a regular packet between Galena and Stillwater, but sank where she struck and never was raised. Other boats entering the St. Croix the same season were the Dubuque and Senator.

In 1848 came the Dr. Franklin, Capt. M. W. Lodwick; Highland Mary, Capt. John Atchison; and the Anthony Wayne, Dr. Franklin No. 2, Relief, Frontier, Smelter, and Preemption. The writer came on the Senator, the earliest boat in the spring of this year. The boat was cast ashore on lake Pepin by the ice. It took nine days in making the trip from Galena to St. Paul, and could not ascend lake St. Croix on account of ice. The passengers were landed at St. Paul and walked to Stillwater, arriving there April 7, 1848.

In 1849 Minnesota was admitted as a territory; and two years later treaties with the Indians opened a large area, and immigration began in earnest. Stillwater had then assumed a prominent place in the new territory. The number of steamboat arrivals increased largely. New and strong steamboat companies were organized; strife for business was

## Library of Congress

fierce and lively. All boats coming to Minnesota included the name of Stillwater in their advertisements and posters.

Among the numerous arrivals during the two years 1849 and 1850 were the steamers Nominee, Yankee, and Lamartine; the Excelsior, Capt. James Ward; Highland Mary, Capt. John Atchison, who died suddenly of cholera on his steamboat at the landing at St. Louis; and the Tiger, Captain Maxwell, a small but exceedingly active boat, probably 100 feet in length and 18 foot beam. In 1850 the Anthony Wayne came to Stillwater and landed her passengers on the platform of the Minnesota House, where "the Old Fort" now stands, fully 200 yards from the present shore line of the lake.

In 1851 the steamboat arrivals were generally two each week during the entire season. The large immigration and importation of lumbermen's supplies made Stillwater an important point. The lumber trade was chiefly at points below Galena, and St. Louis was the wholesale market in which the Stillwater lumbermen purchased their supplies and general merchandise. In 1852 a line of steamboats was established to ply between St. Louis and Stillwater and St. Paul, with the intermediate points. This temporary organization was supplemented by the formation of the Northern Line Packet Company, owning boats of large tonnage and superior passenger accommodations. Nearly all the boats of this line made Stillwater their terminal on their trips for many years during the continuance of the organization.

In 1856 the St. Croix lake and river passenger and freight traffic was inaugurated by the advent of the complete little steamer Eolian, the first regular boat to enter the trade between Prescott, Stillwater, and Taylor's Falls. Capt. S. L. Cowan was the master, and David Bronson, clerk. Other boats were the H. S. 669 Allen, Capt. Strong; Enterprise, Capt. John Langford; The Pioneer; Wyman X, Capt. Wyman X. Folsom; G. B. Knapp, Capt. Oscar Knapp, who was also the master of the Nellie Kent, Jennie Hayes and Cleone; the Viola, Capt. Bartlett; and the Swallow, Capt. Samuel Hanks. The H. S. Allen

## Library of Congress

was for one or two seasons commanded by Captain Strong, and for several succeeding seasons by Captain Isaac Gray.

In 1857 the Equator, Captain Asa Green, master, divided the traffic with the Eolian, the Pioneer, Captain Storer, the Bangor, Capt. Fortune, and the Viola, Capt. Bartlett. Captain Gray sold the H. S. Allen, and built the G. H. Gray.

On the opening of the St. Croix packet trade, most of the large boats plying between St. Louis and St. Paul reshipped their passengers and freight at Prescott for the St. Croix valley, and Prescott was a lively little city. Several down river boats landed daily and two packets left daily for the St. Croix. Many of the old settlers of the St. Croix valley remember the stirring steamboat times of the fifties. These boats carried to their destination many pioneers who, with their children, opened the wild land of the St. Croix valley. Their houses thatched with hay have passed from sight, but not from memory. The first few acres cleared and cultivated during those early years have been increased to many farms of large areas, equipped with comfortable homes, great barns, and large herds of stock. Verily, the immigrant families have their own vine and fig tree for home and shelter. The little tots who were carried ashore from the boats in their mothers' arms have become prominent in the history of our state.

Possibly one of the most important adjuncts to the city of St. Paul was the St. Croix valley. The writer can testify that many of the large commercial houses in that city were assisted to their present eminence in the commercial affairs of the state by the trade of the St. Croix valley; and their owners owe very much to the people of this valley for the large competencies they have acquired, and for their present high standing in the commercial world. An examination of the Stillwater banks shows that for many years the St. Croix valley paid to St. Paul merchants from one to one and a half million dollars annually.

Apropos to steamboats and navigation, I wish to correct an erroneous impression that has gained some credence, in regard to 670 the gradual failing of the water supply of

## Library of Congress

our streams, by relating some of my observations and experiences of the past. Since the Duluth and St. Paul railroad, then so-called, was built into Stillwater, it frequently occurred that the lower river boats were unable to ascend the Mississippi river to St. Paul, because of low water, and were obliged to bring their passengers and freight to Stillwater, and to reship by rail to St. Paul. During the seasons of 1862 and 1863 we had exceedingly low water in all the northwestern streams. In 1863 I had charge of a small stern-wheel boat called the Alone. When I went on board of the boat to take the management as master and pilot, the name struck me as being singular. I inquired of the owner the origin of the name, and he replied that his wife ran away and left him alone. I took charge and began making trips with freight from Read's Landing to Stillwater and intermediate points. The water kept on falling. The boat was loaded to draw 20 inches, and finally the water became so scant that I had to employ four yoke of oxen to pull the boat over Willow bar at Hudson. Where the Mississippi river enters the head of Lake Pepin the stream is wide and shoal. Here I was annoyed and delayed by cattle feeding on the water grass that grew above the surface, and was obliged to have my crew stand on the lower deck of the boat to drive the cattle away in order to prevent them from being run over. I had heard of light draft boats running on a dew, but it must have been when the dew was on and the cattle off.

### **STEAMBOAT BUILDING.**

In 1887 Swain & Durant built the steamer Borealis Rex. This boat, now seventeen years old, has been in the passenger trade constantly, and is one of the swiftest boats running out of the port of Natchez. Captain Swain built the Verne Swain, a passenger boat now running on the lower river; the Percy Swain, a popular passenger boat; and the Fred Swain and the Little Rufus, two popular southern passenger boats. He is now completing the large new steamer, Verne Swain, which will take the place of the Fred Swain on the Illinois river, when that boat enters traffic between Illinois river points and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

Captain Morgan built the steamers Isaac Staples and Edwin Staples, for Isaac Staples.

Captain Register built the Bun Hersey, and the Lora was built by Captain Smith and Captain Kent.

A prominent St. Croix boat was the Maggie Reaney. Adolph Munch built the Osceola; Martin Mower built the Gracie Mower; a man named Winch built the Delta. A small boat, the Plow Boy, ran between Prescott and Hastings. Messrs. Ham, West, and Truax built the Luella, which made occasional trips to Stillwater. The Columbia was built by George Miller for William Sauntry. The Wyman X, was built by W. H. C. Folsom of Taylor's Falls, and he also built the Frankie Folsom. The Minnie Wills and Mark Bradley were built by C. G. Bradley of Osceola. The steamer St. Croix was built by Butler & Gray, Stillwater. The Helen Mar was Built at Osceola by William Kent and John Dudley; The Joe Long was built by David M. Swain for Captain Long of Le Claire; the Ravenna was built by Anderson & O'Brien of Stillwater; the Jennie Hayes was built at Franconia by O. F. Knapp & Sons. Among the boats built by Durant, Wheeler & Co and J. Batchelder were the Pauline, Daisy, Nettie Durant, Ed. Durant, Jr., R. J. Wheeler, the Dispatch, the new Louisville, Gardie Eastman, Kit Carson, Ten Broeck, Robert Dodds, Cyclone, and Nina. The Ada B., Gracie Mower, Eva, and Arcola, were built by Martin Mower. From the above it will be noted that steamboat building has been an important industry on the St. Croix, particularly at Stillwater. The boats were built mostly for towing purposes, and they have been noted for their power and speed.

The following raft boats have been in commission on Lake St. Croix: Alvira, Lone Star, Viola, Julia Hadley, Iowa City, Pioneer, Alone, Louisville, Moonstone, Annie Gordon, Abner Gile, Argosa, Artemus Lamb, Buckeye, Brother Jonathan, Bill Henderson, Chas. Rodgers, Clyde, Chauncey Lamb, Enterprise, D. A. McDonald, Jim Watson, J. W. Van Sant, Kate Waters, L. W. Barden, L. W. Crane, Le Claire Belle, M. Whitmore, Mollie Mohler, Minnie Wills, Mark Bradley, Natrona, Dexter, Dan Hine, I. E. Staples, Hiram Price, Hudson, Helen Mar, James Malborn, Park Painter, Pearl, Penn Wright, Prescott, Robert Ross, Swallow,

## Library of Congress

Sterling, St. Anthony Falls, Vivian, Lydia Van Sant, Black Hawk, Alice D., St. Croix, Edwin C., Baby, Flora, Sam Atlee, Menominie, Juniata, Sam Van Sant, Mars, Musser, Lady Grace, Joe Long, Pilot, Rambo, Georgie S., Gypsy, Mary B., F. C. 672 Brockman, W. H. Kendall, Wanderer, Robert Semple, Gazelle, Jessie Bills, Saturn, Borealis Rex, F. Schulenberg, Daniel Hillman, Minnesota, F. Boeckeler, Lafayette Lamb, Rutledge, Park Bluff, Daisy, Silver Crescent, G. B. Knapp, W. H. Wilson, Jennie Brown, Lion, Horace H., Hennepin, Satellite, Pathfinder, Stillwater, Silas Wright, Union, William White, W. H. Clark, Wyman X., Robert Dodds, Gardie Eastman, Nettie Durant, E. W. Durant, Jr., R. J. Wheeler, Isaac Staples, David Bronson, Bun Hersey, Ben Hershey, Moline, Eclipse, F. Weyerhaeuser, F. C. R. Denkman, Cyclone, Henrietta, Flora Clark, Glenmont, Frontenac, A. T. Jenks, Kit Carson, Kentucky No. 2, Hamburg, Dispatch, Lizzie Gardner, Hyde Clarke, Robert Burdette, Ida Fulton, Ravenna, Waunetta, Inverness, Scotia, Pauline, and Sea Wing.

### **THE GIANT ST. CROIX BOOM.**

This concern has been and will continue to be an important factor in the lumber interest of the St. Croix district until the last log has passed the ordeal of its predecessors. Until 1850 the logs came down the St. Croix and were caught and held in the various sicughs, where they were rafted for market or sorted for the local saw mills. In 1850 a boom was constructed two miles above Osceola, where logs were sorted for some years. The St. Croix Boom Company, incorporated February 27, 1856, was organized by the following named gentlemen: Martin Mover, W. H. C. Folsom, Isaac Staples, Christopher Carli, Samuel Burkleo, and their associates. The management for many years was in the hands of Martin Mower and Isaac Staples. In 1889 a company was formed which effected a lease of the entire boom property. The officers of the new management, which still continues, are William Sauntry, president; James Mulvey, vice-president; Samuel Mc-Clure, secretary and treasurer. The directors consist of the officers, Jacob Bean, and a few others.

### **SCENERY OF THE ST. CROIX LAKE AND RIVER.**

## Library of Congress

A few words concerning this beautiful lake and river will not be amiss. For many years before the large lumber operations filled the St. Croix river with logs, the river was the daily route for freight and excursion steamers. It is a stream of surpassing beauty, a kaleidoscopic panorama, bringing delightful scenery to view with every turn of the stream. It has high bluffs, picturesque rocks, and innumerable springs gushing from the rocky cliffs above the bed of the stream, while the entire river from its source to its junction with the Mississippi is increased from the flow of springs in the river bed. The magnificence of the scenery has not deteriorated by time. Nature's handiwork has not been marred by the vast lumber traffic of more than half a century. Ere long the great volume of the lumber history will be closed. The exciting trips up the St. Croix, and the wonderful and weird specimens of nature's generous gifts, the Dalles of the St. Croix, will attract the visitor as in the days of old. Excursions up the St. Croix will continue to attract lovers of nature and fishermen.

Recognizing that what I have written is to become a part of the history of Minnesota, I have brought to bear recollections of fifty-six years, during which time my friends and associates were the men of whom I have written. Valuable assistance has been afforded me by Captain Russell Blakeley's work on "The Advent of Commerce in Minnesota," in Volume VIII of this Society's Collections; by W. H. C. Folsom's "Fifty Years in the Northwest," and by his "History of Lumbering in the St. Croix Valley," published by this Society in its Volume IX; and also by personal information from Messrs. A. L. Larpenteur and Isaac Labissonniere, coupled with a large array of facts bearing upon this subject, from individual lumber and steamboat men.

Gentlemen of the Minnesota Historical Society, I have to the best of my ability performed the duty assigned me. It has been a labor filled with many pleasant recollections, but tinged with sad memories, because the vast army of those who took part in this history, having performed their life work, have been called from labor to rest. But few who formed that mighty host remain. This article but chronicles their efforts; of the result the living may judge.

**STATISTICS.**

In connection with this article it may be mentioned that a vast number of logs have been brought to Stillwater by rail, shipments of that kind up to the present season amounting to 158,446,000 43 674 feet. A tabulation of logs that came through the boom, lumber sawed at mills on headwaters of the St. Croix, and rail shipments, is as follows:

**Logs Scaled through the St. Croix Boom.**

Year. Feet (approximate)

1840 5,000,000

1841 8,000,000

1842 9,000,000

1843 10,000,000

1844 15,000,000

1845 20,000,000

1846 40,000,000

1847 60,000,000

1848 62,000,000

1849 75,000,000

1850 90,000,000

1851 100,000,000



## Library of Congress

1852 110,000,000

1853 120,000,000

1854 125,000,000

1855 130,000,000

1856 135,000,000

1857 140,000,000

1858 142,000,000

1859 145,000,000

1860 150,000,000

1861 140,000,000

1862 20,000,000

1863 20,000,000

1864 140,000,000

1865 130,000,000

1866 145,000,000

1867 128,000,000

1868 145,000,000

## Library of Congress

1869 150,000,000

1870 165,000,000

1871 170,000,000

1872 180,000,000

1873 160,000,000

1874 120,000,000

3,504,000,000

Year. Logs. Feet.

1875 782,685 121,389,720

1876 898,340 153,252,000

1877 765,004 130,540,890

1878 810,320 132,735,870

1879 1,146,850 201,763,500

1880 1,178,940 201,440,800

1881 1,528,250 231,000,500

1882 1,652,890 273,810,400

1883 1,672,350 271,272,800

## Library of Congress

1884 1,723,450 274,350,600

1885 1,590,860 225,540,800

1886 1,556,820 191,454,500

1887 1,726,800 270,060,100

1888 2,256,870 365,480,300

1889 1,987,689 262,385,980

1890 3,468,320 452,360,890

1891 2,520,380 315,180,700

1892 3,361,799 436,899,770

1893 3,030,884 359,468,720

1894 2,496,262 281,470,400

1895 3,441,991 373,062,850

1896 2,258,622 321,764,530

1897 3,082,456 311,084,290

1898 3,213,537 36,479,950

1899 3,676,958 391,083,770

1900 2,397,940 239,27,730

## Library of Congress

1901 3,134,448 251,448,220

1902 1,761,015 160,149,910

1903 3,010,750 245,675,230

63,133,480 7,781,835,720

1837–38 300,000 feet.

1838–39 700,000

1839–40 1,500,000 2,500,000

1840–74 3,504,000,000

Total 11,288,335,720

675

Logs brought by railroad to Stillwater 158,446,000

Lumber sawed at mills on headwaters of the St. Croix 4,237,000,000

Total of the St. Croix basin 15,683,781,720

### **Logs Brought by Rail to Lake St. Croix.**

Feet.

Durant & Wheeler, and Jordan & Mathews, Hudson 18,000,000

C. N. Nelson Lumber Co. (1882) 5,000,000

## Library of Congress

Clinton Lumber Co. (1890) 3,000,000

Musser, Sauntry & Co., Hudson 43,800,000

William Kaiser 14,710,000

Ott, Menser & Co. 9,360,000

Taber Lumber Co. 21,284,000

Zimmerman & Ives 10,122,000

South Muscatine Lumber Co. 13,634,000

Lindsay Phelps Co. 7,731,000

Atwood Lumber Co. 8,573,000

H. D. Campbell 2,032,000

Rand Lumber Co. 1,200,000

158,446,000